



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WILLAPA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX
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March 28, 2003

Jeff Koenings, Director
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Director Koenings,

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation for the assistance and support your agency's personnel have recently provided at the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge.

On March 18th, 30 elk were captured on the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge by helicopter and transported by trailers to a release site elsewhere in Wahkiakum County. This effort concluded several years of action to bring the elk heard within the refuge from a high of 120 animals to the management objective of 15 - 20 animals. Your agency's personnel, along with employees from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, were key to the successful conclusion of this effort.

Equally as important was the achievement on March 26th and 27th, whereby 28 federally endangered Columbian White-tailed Deer were captured in three different locations by helicopter and relocated to a series of islands in the Columbia River upstream of their current range. The goals of the recovery plan will have been met if this relocation effort succeeds in the establishment of a new sub population of deer on secure habitat. Again this effort of volunteers, state, and federal wildlife agencies was the reason for the successful conclusion of this undertaking.

I wish to make a special note to the outstanding efforts of Patrick Miller, Robin Woodin, Eric Holman, Jennifer Brookshier, and Jay Brightbill of your department. Their professionalism, dedication, enthusiasm and skill were apparent during the relocations as well as during the planning and preparatory stages preceding the relocation event. It is reassuring to note that although difficult resource issues can be controversial and difficult to implement, such as recovery of an endangered species or relocation of big game animals, they can be done in such a cooperative manner. Again my sincerest thanks to your department and participating staff for their endeavors this past month.

Sincerely,

Charles Stenvall,
Project Leader

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